

**T**HE WILDERNESS realm seemingly set aside at the creation. But as a national park—the oldest and largest in the Nation—Yellowstone measures its age, and 1972 marks a century.

During these hundred years, more than 48 million persons have visited the vast federal preserve in northwest Wyoming. For millions of others, the name alone has offered a sense of identity with America. No matter that, among all the national parks, attendance is higher at Great Smoky Mountains, and that the scenery, many claim, is more spectacular at Glacier. Yellowstone continues to stand as

the dozen of national parks in this country and, indeed, in the world.

As I drove through the west entrance of the park on a day stifled by August heat, my thoughts were of a time, years ago, when an aunt returned from a vacation and, as aunts are given to do, distributed souvenirs of places she had visited. For me there was a coin bank in the shape of a moose, with the name "Yellowstone" burned into its wooden base. The bank is still among my belongings, having become, like bronzed baby shoes, one of those possessions kept through sentiment.

Such mementos of the park are found in homes across the country: pictures of Old Faithful

44° 27' 38" N  
110° 49' 41" W

617

